

You better check with those seniors, because what they tell us is they like Medicare. They want Medicare. The only thing wrong with Medicare is that it does not cover enough, like prescription drugs, but what they like about it is that it is a known benefit, it is a known premium, and it is there for them when they need it.

Another word that is used all the time is choice. We are going to give senior citizens choices now. Well, I have to tell my colleagues, in all the years that I was the executive director of the Illinois State Council of Senior Citizens and in all the years that I was in the State legislature and now in Congress, never has a senior citizen come up to me and said, Congresswoman, what I want is a choice of HMOs, a choice of insurance companies, send me those brochures so I can pick, tell those insurance agents to get me on the phone so they can pitch their insurance company to me.

Seniors want the kind of choice they get under Medicare, a choice of doctors, a choice of hospitals, a choice of specialists. That is the kind of choices that they want.

In fact, the only choice under this Republican bill is the choice that HMOs and insurers get, not senior citizens, because private drug plans, HMOs, get to choose what premiums to charge. There is no uniform benefit of premium under Medicare.

Private drug plans get to choose the copayments that they will charge. Private drug plans get to choose what pharmacies are in their network. They get to choose what drugs are covered. So if you want to give the HMOs and the insurance companies that kind of choice, then this bill is for you, but if you want to give senior citizens what they really want, then you are going to expand Medicare the way the Democrats have proposed, by giving them a prescription drug benefit under Medicare that they can count on, that they know what the premium is.

This legislation that is passed in the House is going to do exactly what the chairman said. It is going to destroy Medicare. It will be the end of Medicare. That is what happens in 2010 with this bill. So if you do not want to be chased down the street, then all of us better say no to the Republican bill.

HOMELAND SECURITY TECHNICAL CORRECTIONS ACT OF 2003

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California (Mr. COX) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. COX. Mr. Speaker, I include for the RECORD the following exchange of letters relating to yesterday's debate on H.R. 1416, the Homeland Security Technical Corrections Act of 2003.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY,
Washington, DC, May 14, 2003.

Hon. CHRIS COX,
Chairman, Select Committee on Homeland Security,
House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN COX: In recognition of the desire to expedite floor consideration of H.R. 1416, the "Homeland Security Technical Corrections Act of 2003," the Committee on the Judiciary hereby waives consideration of the bill. Section 11 of H.R. 1416 creates new § 5 in the Homeland Security Act of 2002 (Public Law 107-296). New § 5 mandates that any report or notification required by the Homeland Security Act be submitted to the Select Committee on Homeland Security as well as to any other Committees named in the Act. Section 225 of the Homeland Security Act incorporated the Cyber Security Enhancement Act which, among many other things, requires the Attorney General to report to the Judiciary Committee regarding the use of electronic surveillance in emergency situations and requires the U.S. Sentencing Commission to submit a report in response to the Cyber Security Enhancement Act. To the extent that § 11 of H.R. 1416 affects these reports required by § 225 of the Homeland Security Act, these provisions fall within the Committee on the Judiciary's Rule X jurisdiction. However, given the need to expedite this legislation, I will not seek a sequential referral based on their inclusion.

The Committee on the Judiciary takes this action with the understanding that the Committee's jurisdiction over these provisions is in no way diminished or altered. I would appreciate your including this letter in the Congressional Record during consideration of H.R. 1416 on the House floor.

Sincerely,
F. JAMES SENSENBRENNER, Jr.,
Chairman.

SELECT COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND
SECURITY, HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, May 15, 2003.

Hon. F. JAMES SENSENBRENNER, Jr.,
Chairman, Committee on the Judiciary, House
of Representatives, Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN SENSENBRENNER: Thank you for your letter regarding H.R. 1416, the "Homeland Security Technical Corrections Act of 2003." As you noted, § 11 of the bill falls within the Rule X jurisdiction of the Committee on the Judiciary to the extent it concerns the two reports described in your letter. I appreciate your willingness to forgo consideration of the bill, and I acknowledge that by agreeing to waive its consideration of the bill, the Committee on the Judiciary does not waive its jurisdiction over this provision.

I will include a copy of your letter and this response in our committee report and in the Congressional Record during consideration of H.R. 1416 on the House floor.

Thank you for your assistance in this matter.

Sincerely,
CHRISTOPHER COX,
Chairman.

MEDICARE PRESCRIPTION DRUGS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California (Ms. LORETTA SANCHEZ) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. LORETTA SANCHEZ of California. Mr. Speaker, I come before you tonight to talk about the Medicare Prescription Drug and Modernization

Act of 2003 and to place it in context with the overall goals and beliefs of the President and the Republican party.

The Republican bill, H.R. 1, is quite simply a first step toward the Republicans' goal to privatize Medicare. My colleagues on the other side of the aisle want to do this for a couple of reasons.

The first is that they firmly believe that the private sector and the free market are always right and that government is always wrong. I am afraid that they have a very narrow-minded and simplistic view of how our economy, our government and our country are supposed to function.

There has been a shift in the rhetoric used during political debate in this country since the election of this President. There has been a conscious effort by his office and the Republican leadership of the House to use language that paints critical issues in simplistic black and white, us versus them, good versus evil, terms, ultimately simplifying the debate into a three word sound bite.

I view this as a very unfortunate occurrence because it allows a certain mental laziness to take over this body. When it is really our duty, it is our duty to debate, to discuss and to think very carefully and critically about very complex and important work that we do in this Chamber.

No one here has more respect for the power, the creativity and problem solving ability of the free market as I do. I am a hard-nosed, show-me-the-bottom-line businesswoman through and through, but my admiration of the market is based on years of deep study of its function and a real understanding of how it works.

My Republican colleagues, on the other hand, seem to feel that the invisible hand of Adam Smith and the hand of God are the same thing but our free market is not an all powerful system without limitations.

The free market is an incredible tool that has advanced many areas of human endeavor, but in order for it to work, it must include one very important ingredient, profit, and without this critical component, the free market system is useless.

Medicare was created in 1965 precisely to address the failure in this market. It was not profitable to treat our seniors with a free market health insurance industry so they found a solution to insuring the elderly. They just decided that they would not cover them. After all, old people get sick too much and insurance companies would have to pay. They figured that if you want to make money in the medical insurance game, insure young, healthy people, not old sick people.

Luckily for America, during the 1960s and 1970s and 1980s Democrats controlled this Congress and they were not satisfied with the solution that would push our mothers and our fathers, our grandmothers, our grandfathers out into the cold. So Democrats set up the government entitlement called Medicare.